

Vialex signs charter to improve working practice

Vialex, the Edinburgh-based legal services firm, has signed the Mindful Business Charter.

This move has already been made by a wide range of businesses and professional service firms around the world in a collective commitment to address avoidable stresses in working practices, promoting healthier and more effective ways of working.

The Charter, originally launched by Barclays and law firms Pinsent Masons and Addleshaw Goddard in October 2018, brings together organisations and their service providers to reach a shared agenda for mental health and wellbeing.

At an event during Mental Health Awareness Week in the UK, Vialex pledged its commitment to abide by a set of principles centred on openness and respect for each other, improved communication, respect for working hours and considerate delegation of tasks.

The Mindful Business Charter provides organisations and individuals with the framework, permission and challenge to

dare to be different and to work together across the business community to rehumanise the workplace.

It encourages people to be more thoughtful about the impact they have on each other and by becoming signatories, businesses are pledging to try to do things differently.



Keith Anderson

Keith Anderson, chief executive of Vialex, said: “We are delighted to have become a signatory to the Mindful Business Charter. From an employer perspective it supports an effective system for managing physical and psychological safety, underpinned by policies and procedures which support employee wellbeing.

“For the employee it means having the confidence to raise concerns about mental health issues before they get out of control, which of course will only ever be possible if the working environment supports that.”

By becoming a signatory, Vialex is committed to supporting its staff around healthier working practices that it hopes will help them adapt as everyone emerges from the Covid-19 pandemic and continues to adjust to ways of working and living with its ongoing impact.

Mr Anderson said: “Since Covid-19, remote working has been encouraged, and at times demanded of us, and with that has brought, for many, feelings of isolation and higher levels of anxiety. There is now more time to work because the lines between work and leisure have become so blurred and it will always be leisure that gets squeezed.

“This may be good for business, and productivity, in the short term but not in the long run if it leads to an exhausted or burned-out workforce. That is why my business supports the Mindful Business Charter. Its aim is to remove unnecessary sources of stress and promote better mental health and

wellbeing in the workplace – easier said than done and, especially now, because the workplace is everywhere.

“Remote working has seen to that and the expectation across all business that those with whom you deal should respond immediately to emails, text messages and calls, irrespective of when they are sent, which to an extent existed before, is even more evident now.

“The need to respond immediately may be the case sometimes but never as a matter of course. So, the charter, amongst other things, encourages respect for colleagues’ rest periods (including, and how strange it is to have to say this, uninterrupted holidays) and their need to switch off.

“It may suit me to catch up with some work late in an evening or at the weekend, but is it necessary to send emails to colleagues there and then and gatecrash their downtime? Probably not and so best to wait until the next working day.

“It is all about openness and respect and building trust by effective communication.

“We spend a significant part of our lives at work so we owe it to ourselves and our colleagues to make it the best experience it can be, and in that way best serve our clients and customers. And for employers, quite apart from it being the right thing to do anyway, it cannot be bad for business, or efficiency, to have a workforce which is valued and cared for.”